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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250-1340 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2614

June 11, 1993

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy and Alexander Zaveryukha, deputy prime minister of the Russian Federation, sign a Food for Progress agreement under which the United States will provide \$700 million in agricultural assistance to Russia. At the ceremony Espy said the agreement shows our nation's commitment to the Russian people as they restructure their economy, and it shows the Administration's commitment to help U.S. farmers and agribusiness maintain the U.S. position in the market. USDA photo by Byron Schumaker.



NATIONAL SERVICE -- In testimony to the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy unveiled three proposals being developed at USDA in anticipation of Congressional passage of the National Service Trust Act. The proposals are a National Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Corps, a National Environmental Youth Corps, and the National Rural Development Corps. The National Service Trust Act would create a domestic Peace Corps to tackle pressing national problems while bridging racial and social gaps in the United States. Participants would earn income for educational use in return for two years of service. If the programs are funded they would begin in the fall of 1994. "The President's goal is nothing short of creating a national service program so successful that it will become a permanent fixture of American society," Espy told the Committee. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

UPGRADING INSPECTIONS -- USDA is undertaking five initiatives to improve meat inspection. They include: continuation of special in-plant reviews and a quarterly report to USDA headquarters on corrective actions ordered by the Food Safety and Inspection Service; publication in the Federal Register of criteria for rapid microbiological tests in processing plants; publication of regulations mandating installation of a hazard analysis critical point system; and a proposal for needed changes in meat inspection laws. Regional hearings have received proposed changes in the laws to improve meat inspections. The final hearing is scheduled for June 18 in Philadelphia. **Contact: Pat Wagner (202) 720-9113.**

NATIONAL HUNGER FORUM -- Former secretaries of agriculture Bob Bergland and John Block will join Secretary Mike Espy at USDA's National Hunger Forum, June 17, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Andrew Mellon auditorium on Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. Seventy participants will be divided into four panels to examine the extent and consequences of hunger, access to a healthy diet, empowerment and self sufficiency, and priorities for change. They will review the government's role, and public-private partnerships, in addressing the problem of hunger. **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

BROILER EXPORTS -- The United States is the world's largest exporter of broiler meat. Exports this year are expected to total 1.6 billion pounds, about seven percent of domestic production, compared to 1.5 billion pounds in 1992. The export value of poultry meat and eggs has increased 74 percent since 1989, to an estimated \$865 million in 1993. The U.S. poultry industry is experiencing favorable economic conditions. Feed costs are lower, and strong demand is keeping prices higher. **Contact: Leland Southard (202) 219-0767.**

REDUCING SALMONELLA -- USDA engineers have successfully tested a high-pressure air and water scrubbing system on a chicken processing line where much of the Salmonella contamination occurs. Tests show that the forced-air water bath cut contaminated carcasses by 90 percent compared to the plain water bath currently used. The technology produced by USDA's Agricultural Research Service is now ready for full-scale testing by the poultry industry. **Contact: James Dickens (706) 546-3205.**

RESISTING BREAKAGE -- USDA scientists have produced a corn hybrid that has harder kernels for livestock feed and are less likely to break before reaching export markets. The hybrid is a cross between Argentinean and United States lines. Agricultural Research Service scientists added a greater proportion of the U.S. variety to improve yield without sacrificing quality. The hybrids at harvest contain less moisture, reducing the need for artificial drying that can increase breakage. 640,000 tons of broken kernels and foreign matter, worth only half as much as whole kernels, were removed from corn exported from the U.S. to foreign markets last year. **Contact: Linda Pollak (505) 294-7831.**

HELPING THE HARDWOOD INDUSTRY REMAIN COMPETITIVE -- USDA's National Agricultural Library has four reports to help the hardwood industry overcome problems with harvesting and milling. The subjects of the four reports are: detecting wetwood in trees, logs and boards; alternatives to petroleum-based products to protect lumber; detecting defects to improve milling; and new cutting technologies. Hardwood lumber produced in 1990 was valued at \$3.5 billion. The industry employs 700,000 workers. Copies of the reports are available by calling (301) 504-5204. **Contact: Brian Norris (301) 504-6778.**

YO-YO DIETS AND OSTEOPOROSIS -- USDA researchers have found that people who lose and gain weight in a yo-yo fashion could be at higher risk for osteoporosis. A study group of obese young women averaged a two to three percent loss of bone during a five-month weight loss program, even though they exercised regularly and got ample dietary calcium. Tests also showed that they had a lower rate of bone formation and a higher rate of bone breakdown during the diet program. Bone loss needs to be replaced when weight is regained or the risk for osteoporosis could be higher. **Contact: Henry Lukaski (701) 795-8429.**

KEEPING SUMMER FOOD SAFE -- Warm summer temperatures increase the possibility of food poisoning during picnics and camping trips. USDA offers six tips for keeping your summer food safe: Use a cooler containing ice cubes to keep food cold; Pack foods in reverse order of use, first foods packed directly from the refrigerator are the last to be used, and raw meat or fish are wrapped so that juices do not leak onto other foods; Protect your cooler from the sun; Keep hands and utensils clean when handling the food; Thoroughly cook raw meat and poultry until the pink is gone and juices run clear, cook fish until it "flakes" with a fork and; Put leftovers back on ice, perishable foods left out of refrigeration for one hour when the day is above 90 degrees are unsafe and should be discarded. If you have a question about food safety or nutrition call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-800-535-4555. **Contact: Susan Conley (202) 690-0351.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1879 -- Brenda Curtis takes you on a tour of one of the world's largest herb farms. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1361 -- Food from ethanol?; turkey products galore; growing great herbs; moving houseplants outdoors; repotting time for houseplants. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1871 -- USDA News Highlights; Russian aid package details; meat exports growing; high tech peaches; a new way to promote ethanol. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1624 -- Centenarian seeds; long term apple storage; bee breeders selected; grow your own herbicides; sheep genes linked to fat. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, June 15, crop and weather update, farm income projection, milk production; Wednesday, June 16, sugar update; Thursday, June 17, Africa/Mideast outlook, cherry production; Friday, June 18, ag outlook, cattle on feed; Monday, June 21, U.S. trade update; Tuesday, June 22, ag resources (land values), crop and weather update, catfish processing; Wednesday, June 23, dairy outlook.

These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on food safety tips for very young children and the elderly; DeBoria Janifer reports in purslane research; Patrick O'Leary reports on marsh grass to control shoreline erosion.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy signs a memorandum with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities to help increase employment opportunities in USDA for Hispanic students; USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather and crop progress.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on a new program to deliver produce to food banks; Pat O'Leary reports on computer landscaping; Lynn Wyvill reports on vitamin E and immunity in the elderly.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

WASHINGTON AG WATCH...was a success, says **Randy Rasmussen** (KMA, Shenandoah, IA). In addition to meeting and recording Secretary Espy and Congressional leaders, it provided an opportunity for a first look at new members of the Clinton administration including several sub-cabinet members at USDA. Randy says NAFB is looking forward to conducting the program next year.

ITS A BUSY TIME...says **Dan Gordon** (Tennessee Agrinet, Nashville). Planting is on schedule after falling behind early in the season. Dan says producers have expressed concern about the federal energy tax proposals. He's closely following developments on the issue.

MOISTURE...arrived just in time, says **Bruce Gaarder** (KNEB, Scottsbluff, NE), irrigation was already underway in many areas. Bruce says his producers have developed a major interest in NAFTA. They're hoping for a change in the language regarding sugar and dry beans, the two major crops in his area, so that they are not adversely impacted by the agreement.

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ITS BEEN SO DRY...that producers stopped planting cotton and peanuts, says **Everett Griner** (Southeast Agrinet, Moultrie, GA). There was no rain in his region during the months of April and May. Recent showers got farmers back in the fields, but planting is behind the curve. Everett says the dryness didn't hurt the peach crop however. Harvesting is underway on a good crop.

FARM BROADCAST PROGRAMMING...will begin July 6 on KCLL Lompoc, CA. Morning reports will air at 5:30 and on the hour and half-hour until 8 a.m. A noon hour program will be hosted by **De Wayne Holmdahl**, a Lompoc Valley rancher and former Santa Barbara County supervisor.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Artis Ford** (Information Service, Mississippi State University, MS). The international Agricultural Communicators in Education presented him its Pioneer ACE award for his contributions to agricultural communications. ...and to **Tyson Gair** (Mississippi State) for winning first place in TV news from the College Public Relations Association of Mississippi.

VIC POWELL 
Chief, Radio & TV Division